



Testimony in Support
The Education Equity And Property Tax Relief Act
May 19, 2026

The Latino Policy Institute submits this testimony in support of S2226, legislation that would strengthen Rhode Island's education funding formula by expanding the student success factor to include Medicaid enrollment as an additional measure of student need beginning in FY 2027.

Rhode Island's education funding formula was designed to better account for the realities facing students living in poverty and students requiring additional academic support. This legislation represents an important and thoughtful step toward improving the accuracy of how student need is identified and funded across the state.

The Latino Policy Institute strongly supports efforts to modernize and strengthen poverty measurement within the funding formula. Many students and families who experience economic hardship may not always be captured through a single eligibility metric. Including Medicaid enrollment as an additional indicator will help ensure that more students with significant economic need are recognized within the formula and that school districts receive resources that more accurately reflect the populations they serve.

This is particularly important for Latino, multilingual, immigrant, and working-class families who may experience housing instability, rising healthcare costs, food insecurity, or fluctuating income levels while still falling through gaps in traditional poverty identification systems. Expanding direct certification methods can help reduce undercounting of vulnerable students and create a more equitable distribution of educational resources statewide.

The Latino Policy Institute also appreciates that the legislation builds upon ongoing efforts to improve transparency, coordination, and data accuracy between state agencies and the education funding formula. Reliable and comprehensive data systems are essential to ensuring that education funding reaches students and communities with the greatest needs.

In addition, we support the bill's continued recognition of multilingual learners through the multilingual learner (MLL) factor and the reporting requirements intended to strengthen accountability and best practices in serving MLL students. Rhode Island's student population is increasingly multilingual and diverse, and the state's funding structures must continue evolving to reflect those realities.

At its core, S2226 is about improving fairness and precision in how Rhode Island allocates education resources. Students facing higher levels of economic hardship often require additional academic, social, emotional, and wraparound support to fully thrive in school environments. Ensuring that the funding formula more accurately captures those needs is both fiscally responsible and educationally necessary.

For these reasons, the Latino Policy Institute respectfully urges the Senate Finance Committee to support passage of S2226.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Latino Policy Institute